

Armour of proof, Or a Sovereign ANTIDOTE, Against the Contagion of Evil Company.

Together with the
Skill, Will, and Industry of lewd
ones; in Tempting to sin, and drawing
to Perdition.

The S E C O N D P A R T.

DEDICATED

To all Young Students in the Uni-
versities and Inns of Court, Apprentices
of London, Sons and Servants in the whole
NATION,

By R. Younge of Roxwell in Essex, Florilegus.

Licensed and Entred according to Order.

*My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not: walk thou not in the
way with them; refrain thy foot from their path, Pro. 1.10,15.*

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Armour of proof, against evil Society, &c.

The Second Part.

Sect. 24.

And so much of the first part, touching the many advantages, that *Satans Instruments* have above *Gods servants*, in *winning*, and *keeping*, and *improving* their converts : What men ought to do, that would not be overcome by their Allurements : and that of all the rest, we must restrain the company of wicked men, and not dispute with them ; if we mean not to be infected by them, partake of their sins; nor be infected in their punishments. Together with the lawfulness of shunning all familiar society, and converse, with such. And now lest what hath been said, should not be sufficient ; See in this *Second Part*, some *Reasons* to enforce men thereunto ; which the godly wise propound to themselves, when they bid adieu to their old associates in the broad way, and purpose to pledge them no more, in their wicked Customs.

Reasons of breaking off Society, with our vicious Consorts.

First, That thereby they may come to the sight of their *Errors*, and consequently be reclaimed. St. Paul when he commands the *Corinthians* to shun the incestuous person out of their society and fellowship, gives this reason, *that his Spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord*, 1 Cor. 5.5. Again, when he wrote to *Timothy*, that he had done the same, touching *Hymenaeus* and *Alexander*, he yieldeth this to be the reason, *that they might learn not to blaspheme*, 1 Tim. 1.20. And in another place, *If any man obey not our saying, note him by a Letter, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed*, 2 Thes. 3.14.

It was the practise of the primitive Church, in her first love, that she might shine in beauty and fairness above all other Synagogues, nor to admit any scandalous person, or open offender into the communion of Saints, until their foul spots were carefully washed off, and taken away by the tears of repentance. The *bread of the children* was not given unto *dogs*; neither, by an equal bounty, to the godly and the wicked, was there an equal encouragement to godliness and iniquity, but a separation was made between the sick and the whole; and this separation had no other intent, but edification; even an edification of the spirit, by the destruction of the flesh : so that men could find no fault with the dispensers of this power, having nothing to complain of, but that their lives thereby were sought to be amended, & their souls to be saved. I confess, that was a separator of a higher nature, the power of the keys being added, they were delivered up to *Satan*, that out of heaven

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herein it is not so, but this serves to the same end, and is done only in cases of like fact.

The cause was weighty, for which the gates of heaven were to be locked; great, in the thing done; or great, in the wilfulness of the doer; and this not without reason: for the doom was heavy, and fit for the back of a strong and mighty evil: it was a short damnation, a temporal hell, a shutting out of heaven upon earth, yea, heaven in heaven, even the joyes, and comforts of the spirit of consolation. Neither could it be but an excellent remedy, for, besides that it was Gods institution, the remedy was fitted to the disease: a degree of presumption was encountered with a degree of despair; the Scorpion was made a medecine against the sting of the Scorpion; Satan was set on work, to take him down by terror unto salvation, whom before he animated and puffed up to destruction: he, that said at first, sin boldly, for ye shall not die at all; now he changeth his voice, and saith, thy sin is greater than can be forgiven thee. But the wisdom of dispensation suffered this roaring Lion no longer to terrifie, but until his terror did mollifie: he aimed indeed at despair and destruction; but the Church aimed at humiliation, and conversion, yea, at consolation and salvation. And indeed humiliation for sin, is the only way to conversion from sin; conversion from sin, the only way to the consolations of the Spirit; and the comfortable Spirit is both the guide and the way to life eternal: therefore, when the man is humbled, Satan is cashiered; the horseleech is taken away, when he hath sufficiently abated the vicious and superfluous blood.

Thus were men healed, by wounding, exalted, by humbling: O admirable use and command of satan! he is an enemy to God, and yet doth him service; he is an adversary to man, and yet helps him. A strange thing, that Satan should help the incestuous Corinthian, to the destruction of his flesh, his concupiscence, and the edification of his soul. A strange thing that satan should teach Hymeneus and Alexander not to blaspheme: he is the Author of blasphemies, and yet he teacheth not to blaspheme.

But is satan contrary to himself, and is his Kingdom divided in it self? no surely: but one that is stronger then he both in wisdom and power, manageth both his craft and malice, to ends, which himself intendeth not. The devil is one and the same still, even purely malicious; but God suffers him to go on in his temptations, just so far as temptation is profitable, and no further: therefore while satan is driving the offender to despair, God stops his course, when the sinner is come to due humiliation: and then, as it was with Christ in the wilderness, so is it with the humbled sinner, satan is dismissed, and the Angels come and minister unto him.

This was the nature, manner, and end of publick excommunication: private hath relation to it; both touching cause and end. First, publick had respect to the cause, that it was to be used, only in case of scandalous, open, and notorious impiety: so hath the private; we do not break off society with any for weaknesses, and sins of infirmity. Secondly, that did only aim at their amendment, conversion, and salvation, so doth this; we desire only to have them look into themselves, where the fault lies, and seek to amend their course.

and certainly nothing will sooner make the adulterers or drunkard bethink themselves, then when they see, all that are honest and sober, even their neighbours and old associates, shun their company, and despise them, as if they were not worthy of humane society : and if they have the least desire to be reputed honest and sober again, and admitted their familiar converse, (without which, they are, as it were, banished into exile) they will do what possibly lies in them to redeem their credit, and merit their good opinion, by a more sober, honest, and holy demeanour : the disparity lieth only in the power and severity of the agents : we cannot, we do not, we desire not to deliver them up to Satan, but heartily pray that they may be delivered from him, and all evil.

§. 25.

Secondly, That we may not be infilled by them, nor partake of their sin. It is a true Proverb, *Evil company corrupts good manners*: and, *He that will not evil do, must keep from all that longs thereunto*. To be safe from evil works, is to avoid the occasions; especially, he that will keep himself from iniquity, and *have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*, must have no fellowship with wicked persons, the workers of darkness: Joseph thought no weapon comparable, for the beating off his Mistresses assaults, to running away.

The first thing that God did, after he created heaven and earth, was, to separate light from darkness; probably to shew, that the *good* should first of all separate from the *evil*, if they mean not again to become evil: It is not more hard to find virtue in evil company, then to miss vice. *They were mingled among the heathen* (saith the Psalmist) and what follows? *they learned their works*, Psal. 106.35. Peter had never denied and forsworn his Master, if he had not been in company with Christ's enemies: but then how soon was he changed? Now, saith one, *If such a Cedar fell, how shall I stand?* I will not therefore hazard the frail potheard (my flesh) upon the rock of evil company for any thing. David had never dissembled, if he had not been among the Philistines: which made him after (that he might wisely shun that occasion) say, *depart from me all ye workers of iniquity, for I will keep the commandments of my God*, Psal. 119.115. intimating, that he could not otherwise: nay, how many thousands have confess at the Gallows, *I had never come to this but for evil company, which drew me to these courses*? yea, the truth is, we cannot come amongst these vipers, and not be stung by them; for even to hear them speak, will make us either angry, or guilty; and not to be intemperate with them for company, is a great daintie, if not a quarrel. Many a man had been *good*, that is not, if he had but kept *good company*.

There is a pliable disposition in all men naturally to evil; we follow it, as Iron doth the Loadstone, by a natural and hidden propensity; our corrupt nature is like fire, which, if there be any infection in the room, draws it freight to it self: or like Jet, which omits all precious objects, and attracts nothing but straws and dust: or, if a man hath both good and bad in his nature, either of them will fortifie, as they meet with their like; or decline as they

find a contrary : as Sampson did in his strength, who, at first being hard enough for all the Princes of the Philistines, at last, by keeping Delilah company, they set a boy to lead him.

Yea, suppose a man stands indifferent, his company, whether good or evil, will work him into a new nature; and by continuance, he shall grow up to the same height with them, as the Hop groweth to the end of the pole, be he never so high, and he himself shall do the like to others ; as one piece of Iron, being rub'd with a Loadstone, will draw another piece, even as if it were the Loadstone it self.

A good man in ill company is like a precious pearl, fallen into the mud ; which the longer it lies, the deeper still it sinks into it : for, if the force of custom, simple and separate be great; the force of custom, copulate, and conjoined, and collegiate, is far greater ; for their example teacheth, company comforteth, emulation quickneth, glory raiseth : so as in such places the force of custom is in her exaltation: which made the Mother of Alexander, the twenty sixth Emperour of Rome, so careful of her sons education, that she kept continually a guard of men to take heed, that no vicious persons came unto him, to corrupt him in evil.

It was a good conceit of Themistocles, and not trivial, when he set up a bill of an house, which he had to let, that he added, aye, and there be good neighbours too ; for it shall go hard, but neighbourhood will somewhat mould the whole family into better or worse, as themselves are. The sore eye, we know, infecteth the sound: and they that sleep with dogs shall swarm with fleas: yea; a man's posterity after him, shall gain, or lose by the bargain. It were happy, if the injury of a wicked man could be confined to his own bosom ; that he only might fare the worse for his sins; that it were but self do, self have: but as his lewdness, like some odious sent, is diffused through the whole room, or place where he is, and reacheth to the times, upon which he is unhappily fain: so after generations are the worse by means of him. An ill president is like Goodwin Sands, which not only swallowed up his patrimony, but still continues a dangerous place, where too many have miscarried. He is a very mean person, that draws not some Clients after him : even Thendas and Judas had their four hundreds to accompany them. One man may kindle such a fire, as thousands are not able to quench : one plague-sore may infect a whole nation : and all the venom of sin is not spent in the act.

Sin among men, like the Murrain in Cattel, or Scab among Sheep, is of a catching and infectious quality : and like the Plague or Leprosie, will run along from one to another : our corrupt nature is like tinder, which is kindled with the least spark : wherefore it behoves us to avoid all provoking objects: as a man that hath Gunpowder in his house, keeps it safe from fire : and well were it for us, if lewd ones were forced to cry as the Leper in Israel, I am unclean, I am unclean.

Every thing labours to make the thing it meets with, like it self ; fire converts all to fire ; air exsiccates and draws to it self ; water moistens and resolveth what it meets withal ; earth changeth all that we commit to it, to her own nature. Every man will be busie in dispensing that quality which is pre-

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dominant in him : we can converse with nothing, but will work upon us, and by the unperceived stealth of time, assimilate us to it self : one rotten Apple will infect a whole stor : one putrid grape corrupts the whole sound cluster. The choice therefore of a mans company, is one of the most weighty actions of our lives; for our future well or ill being, depends on that election : if we chuse ill, every day inclines us to worse, we have a perpetual weight hanging on us, that is ever sinking us down to vice.

Antisthenes wondred at those that were curious in buying but an earthen dish, to see that it had no cracks, nor inconveniences, and yet would be careless in the choice of friends, and take them with the flaws of vice. What was the reason (think we) that our Saviour would not suffer his weak Disciple, in the Gospel, to go and bury his dead father ? Luke 9.60. It was not any averseness to civil, much less filial respect and duty to parents ; yea, he preferred mercy before sacrifice; but he well knew, that when he once met with his carnal friends at the funeral, they would pervert him again, & quickly flout him out of his new Masters service, and that the Gospel should soon lose a Preacher of him. The reason why the Raven returned not into Noahs Ark, as the Dove did, is given by some, "because it met with a dead carcasse by the way.

A wise man will be wary, not only to shun sin in the action, but in the very occasion, How many, that meant not to sin, are won only by the opportunity? for occasion and our nature are like two inordinate lovers, they seldom meet, but they sin together, and every act of sin, ties a new knot: if we keep them a-funder, the harm is prevented: and it is easier to deny a guest at first, than to turn him out, having staid a while ; it is easier to keep fire from flax, than to quench it after it is on fire : a man may spit out a spark, but when once kindled, there is hardly any quenching of it. Why do we pray, deliver us from evil but that we imply, besides all other mischiefs, that there is an infectious power in it, to make us evil ? Let us therefore do what we pray, and pray that we may do it : yea, O Lord, free us both from speech and sight of these bauds & paunders of vice, so far as is possible; if not, at least from joyning in league, or dwelling in house with, or having dependency on such.

O how many are there, that, like the Pine-tree, with their very shadow, hinder all other plants from growing under them ? or, like the great mountain Radish, which, if it be planted near the Vine, causeth it to starve and wither away ? Alas ! it is nothing to be godly in Abrahams house: but for a man to dwell in the tents of Kedar, or to live in the Court of Sardinapalus, and yet to keep himself upright, is a matter of great difficulty, especially, for him that is not well rooted by time and experience. A sore new skin'd will fret off again, with the least rubbing; yea, the very sight of evil is dangerous, to such an one ; lusting, for the most part, follows looking; as we see in Eve, Gen. 3.6. and David, 2 Sam. 11.2,3. which makes Solomon speaking of a strange woman, advise us to keep far from her, and not once come near the door of her house, Prov. 5.8. It is a hard matter for that soul, not to fall into those vices, unto which the eyes and the ears are enured, not out of love, but custom, we fall into some offences.

We read that *Perseus*, that *Ethiopian Queen*, in *Helioderus*, by seeing a

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fair picture of *Peyseus* and *Andromeda*, was brought to bed of a fair white child; whereas Pope *Nicholas* the third's Concubine, by seeing of a Bear, was brought to bed of a Monster. I am sure this is true in the moral of it; which should make us equally love good company, and hate evil. I know there be in every place whole troops of evil persons; and where there are many pots boyling, there cannot but be much scum: so that a man shall find it, either impossible, or hard, never to be amongst them, or shift off their solicitations. Wherefore if at any time (as no fie is more importunate) they thrust themselves into thy conversation, do as those which must necessarily pass by a carriion in the way, hold thy breath, be alone in a multitude, abhor to participate with them in their vices, and hasten to be out of their air, as Peter did out of the high Priests hall, so soon as Christ looked upon him; and if they yet follow thee, turn back to them, with the Angels farewell, *incretet dominus*. And lastly, if by chance, with Peter, thou hast taken the least soyl, or infection from these poysoned and pitchy Links, be sure to scrape or bruise it off thy soul again, by prayer, examination, and humiliation: as they that come out of infected houses, air, or wals their garments, for the more safety. Thus did Peter, not without cause, not without benefit and commodity.

§. 26.

It is true, they will perswade us, that in stead of being infected, we may gain by their company; and tell us, that true Christal may touch the toad without being poisoned; that the Diamond will lie in the fire, without being consumed; that fish may live in salt waters, and yet retain a fresh tast; that though rust will fret into the hardest steel, yet it doth not eat into the Emerald; that though the Loadstone draweth Iron after it, yet it cannot stir gold, nor the Jet steel, though it doth straw; that though the Sun hardens clay, yet it softens wax; that if a ship hath a sure anchor, it may lie safe any where; neither is it absolutely unlawful for us to keep them company, seeing Christ kept company with *Publicans* and sinners of all sorts.

Answ. Here are good words, but no security; which therefore an experienced man gives the hearing of, but stands (the while) upon his own guard. No charity binds us to a trust of those whom we have found faithless. Credulity upon weak grounds, after palpable disappointments, is the daughter of folly. He that hath once broken his faith, will not easily be trusted. I know Physitians may converse with leprous persons, un-infected; but then they must have stronger Antidotes, then their natures give them, or else themselves shall stand in the same need, and of Physitians become Patients, and need Physick: so that may be lawful, in a sage and stayed person, which is unfit for an ungovern'd eye once to look upon. We read, Gen. 19. 17, that *Lot* and his wife, were forbidden to look back at the destruction of *Sodom*; when to *Abraham* it was left at large, and without restraint, he being a man of better ruled affections. Again, I know the Devil cannot hurt me, so long as God is with me: As the best Loadstone cannot draw Iron unto it, if the Diamond be by: yea, the very fear of God, and thought that he looketh on, as one spake of grave *Cato*, will keep a man from yielding to their temptations, as it did *Joseph*, touching his Mistresses allurements: and that faith, as it is no coward, so it is ever

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ever victorious: what then? Thought saith be confident, yet it is not impudent; it knows a guard of *Angels will keep us in all our waies*, but not in our wan-drings: though it may be lawful to come among them, yet wisdom forbears some *lawful* things, because they may be *occasions* of things *unlawful*. He that abstains from nothing that is lawful, will soon be brought to do that which is unlawful. The note which comes too neer in the Margin, will skip into the Text, at the next impression. He that will go as neer the ditch as he can, will at some time or other fall in. He that will do all that he may, will sometimes do what he ought not. It is hard for the best man to say how far he will be tempted. If a man will put himself among *Philistims*, he cannot promise to come forth innocent; or if he do, that soul which lives among thorns, shall hardly thrive in grace. How many have fallen into a fashion of swearing, scoffing, drinking, out of the usual practise of others, as those that live in an ill air, are infected with diseases? A man may pass through *Ethiopia unchanged*, but he cannot dwell there, & not be discoloured. When once a man gives himself over to be the companion of vice, in the end he becomes the ver-y slave of vice. The Ox being tied to the Fig-tree, loseth his strength. Many strokes overthrow the strongest Oke. Many drops of rain, though never so soft, pierce the hardest Marble, yea, even the flint stone. And let graces be never so well fixt in a mans heart, yet he may soon have them consumed and wasted this way, if he take not heed: as Snow and Ice cannot be so hard congealed, but they will melt, if they come to the fire. And little do our peremptory resolvers in this case know, or consider, either the insinuative power of evil, or the treachery of their own hearts, in receiving it, or the importunity of wicked deceivers, in obruding it; they are the worse for their society, and perceive it not.

An Egge covered with salt (as Philosophers teach) hath the meat of it consumed, whilst the shell is whole. And we read of many Towns, which have in time been undermined, even with the most impotent and weak Creatures, as one in *Spain*, with Coneys; in *Theſſalia*, with Moles; in *France* with Frogs, in *Africa* with Flies.

Many an one receives poyson, and knows not when he took it. Many breath in this world, like men sleeping in a boat, are carried down the stream, even to their *Gravesend*, without waking, to think where they are.

No man proves extreameley evil on the sudden: through many insensible declinations do we fall from vertue. Satans agents are still scattering his fiery darts, among the Army of *Israel*; and when they light upon wood, they kindle; when upon flax, they flame; when upon gunpowder, they blow up all. They therefore that love such intricate and perplexed walks, had need of Iron shoes.

True it is, that *Christ* conversed and kept company with *Publicans* and sinners. (as the Phyſitian with the ſick) to heal their souls: neither did they make him *worſe*, but he made them *better*: but as true it is, that he was without the level of temptation; and ſo is no general warrant. I will therfore not only ſhun evil, but the means to come to it; and to avoid hurt, I will keep my ſelf out of shot: neither will I presume, being but a man, to follow my ma-

ster in that which he did as God. Indeed, many are so presumptuous of their strength, that they think they can come in any company, and yet come off clear; but he which comes to save one drowning, must be stronger than the other, or else he will be drowned himself.

Pliny reports, that a Family near *Rome* would go upon live coals without being burnt; had it hereupon been necessary for others to put the same in practice? no, neither is it necessary for us to do that heresie which our Saviour did. Our minds have not that ballast in them, which his had, and so are sooner endangered, by the floods of wickedness.

Secondly, whereas they object, that we may gain by their company: I confess it possible, for even the most venomous and ravenous things that are, have their commodities, as well as their annoyances: and the Cock by scrapping in a dunghill, did once find a Jewel: *Virgil* from *Ennius's* dung did Gold extract: and Apothecaries of Vipers flesh can make an Antidote against poysion: an Harlots face may suggest chastness: and a fiaful surfer may prove an Antidote for sin: yea, as external cold kindles the heat of the stomach, so we find it recorded in holy Writ, that some by a spiritual *Antiperistasis*, have grown hotter in their zeal, by being encompassed with the outward cold of wicked and irreligious company: like Roses and Lillies, which flourish the more for being beset with thorns: and Violets, which are the sweeter and more odoriferous, for being beset with Garlick & Onions; forasmuch as they lack and draw all the ill favours of the ground unto them. Thus it fared with *Lot*, who served God better among the beastly *Sodomites*, then when he was separated from them. And some others there are no doubt, who, as they owe not this grace to themselves, so they are more for wonder, then imitation. For if *Daniel* found a guard in the Lions Den, shall another thrust himself thereinto for shelter? And if *Peter* walkt upon the pavement of the water, did the rest of the Disciples step forth and follow him? No.

Ob, But say some, By keeping them company, we may win them, and happily convert their souls.

Ans^r. I answer. Hope not so much to convert them, as fear that they will pervert thee, for vertue is not so alluring as vice: the one spreads it self, like poysion in a vessel; the other is not half so dispersive. Sin and *Hagar*, are more fruitful then vertue and *Sarah*: falsehood more successful then truth. The sore eye infecteth the sound: the sound will not mend the sore. Vinegar will mar wine; wine will not amend vinegar. Infection is spreading and catching: health is not so. An hundred sound persons shall sooner catch the plague from one infected person, then he receive his health from them.

Solomon that wonder of Wisdom, might think by joyning in affinity with his neighbour Princes, and marrying their Daughters, to win those heathens to the Kingdom of God; but he was deceived, for he could do no good upon them; they wrought him to much evil. And doth not experience teach us, that the good are sooner perverted by the bad, then the bad converted by the good? even as a tainted air doth more easily infect a sound body, then an wholesome can clear the sick.

We read of certain Magnetical, or Adamantine Rocks, in the Isles of *Moni-* *sle*,

against evil Society.

ole, which draw all ships unto them, that have any Iron-pins, holding them so fast, that they are not able to stir : evil society, are such Rocks ; holy men, the ships; natural and inbred corruption, the Iron pins : he that will be safe, let him keep far enough from such Rocks.

A good man, joyned in league with one that is wicked, is like a living man, bound to a dead Corps, which will sooner suffocate him, then he revive than-
er, like an Iſtle, can endure the rough northern wind of persecution well e-
nough, but melteth with the heat of the Sun, sweet allurements of the world,
and the flesh. The children of God are, as it were, dead to their lusts ; but if
they should tempt God, by a too familiar society with the vicious ; who knows,
but as live coals will kindle dead ones, so their evil speeches and actions may
kindle and enflame them with the love and liking of lewdness ? Indeed , as
one said to his suppliant, *make me a Diviner, and I will make thee rich* : so may
a good man say to a vicious, *make me Angelical*, that is, incapable of being sed-
uced, and he do my best to make thee a Convert.

§. 27.

THirdly, Our entireness with wicked men scoffes us, not only in their sins,
but oftentimes in their punishments also ; as it fared with the 36 men
which were slain before Aye, for Achans sake, *Joh. 7.* where we see the ini-
cency of so many thousand Israelites was not so prevalent, to expiate his one
sin, as his one sin was, to taint and bring judgment upon all Israel. If the
Stork be taken damagefieant with the Cranes, she is inwrapped in the same
net , and cannot complain that she is surprised. *He that walketh with the*
wife (saith Solomon) *shall be wise* ; but a companion of fools shall be afflicted,
Prov. 13.20. This Augustine well observes, speaking of the religious, taken am-
ongst the rest of the Gothes, *Fure amaram vitam sentire, quia peccantibus*
amari esse noluerunt. And hereupon Moses separates Israel from Corah, Diz-
than, and Abiram, saying, Depart from the Tents of these wicked men, and
touch nothing of theirs ; lest ye perish with them, *Num. 16.26.* And doth not
God himself say to his people, touching Babylon, *Go out of her my people, that*
ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues, *Rev. 18.4.*
Where sin is let in, punishment will not be kept out. Yea, if Lot had staid in
Sodom, he had been destroyed : if his sons would have gone out, they had
every man escaped.

Indeed, we cannot be too far off from such company ; and it were happy if
they were kept by themselves ; for so long as the infected person is shut up, his
plague doth not spread. And besides the benefit of our safety, wickedness would
soon be ashamed of it self, if it were not for the encouragement of companions.
Solitariness is the fittest Antidote for spiritual infection. It were happy for the
wicked man, if he would be separated from himself. *Antisthenes* would often
say, *It was a great oversight, sithence they purged their Wheat from Darnel, and*
their wars from cowardly Souldiers, that they purged not their commonwealth
from lewd and wicked people.

Or if our persons escape scot-free, yet we may suffer in our estates, and be
crost in our most weighty designes and determinations, only for joyning in
league or friendship with Gods enemies. *Because thou hast joyned thy self with*

Abaziah

Armons of proof

Abariah (saith Eleazar to Jehohaphat) the Lord hath broken thy works and the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish, 2 Chron 20. 37.

But admit they cannot *inf. off.* us, either in their *sin* or *punishment*: yet their *society* will be a shrewd vexation to us. As let a religious man fall into their company, as an honest man may fall into the hands of thieves, they will conspire how to afflict his eyes with unchaste visions; his ears, with fearful oaths; his unwilling appetite, with drunken healths; which even a civilized Pagan would abhor. We read that *Clitemachus* the wrestler (though a great company-keeper, yet) if he had heard but one filthy word, would presently depart. How was just *Lot* vexed with the uncleanly conversation of his wicked neighbours? *Sodom* was worse then a Goal to his righteous soul: and report lies, if our Goals be not much like to *Sodom*, the very dens of mischief, the Schools of wickedness: A Malefactor learns more villainy there, then ever he knew before: drunkenness and blasphemy usurp the place of mortification and humility.

Or lastly, if their *society* be not a *vexation* to our *minds*, at least it will be a great *disparagement* to our *names*: every one will conclude, almost infallibly, such as our *company* is, such is our *disposition*. The common Proverb is, *like will to like*. And, *Birds of a feather will flock together*. When *Jephthah* was himself in banishment, there gathered to him idle fellows, such as himself, *Judg. 11.3.* When *David* was in trouble, and vexed in mind himself; there flockt unto him all those that were in trouble, vexed in mind, or that were in debt, even four hundred of them, to the *Cave of Adullam*, *1 Sam. 22.2.* Yea, our Saviour meets no less then ten Lepers in one knot. Fellowship is that we all naturally affect, though it be in *Leprosie*: even Lepers will flock to their fellows: where shall we find one spiritual leper alone? drunkards, profane persons, heretics, will be sure to comfort with their matches. And hereupon the *Lacedemonians*, when they would certainly be informed, what the disposition and behaviour of any one was, would wisely enquire, with what persons they were linked in fellowship. And indeed, he that makes himself a companion of all, sells his reputation very cheap: It being as great an *Indecorum* for an holy Christian to be in the company of graceless persons, as it is for a reverend Divine to sit upon the Stage in a publick Theatre; or an old man to dance with little children in the streets.

Base company (saith one) *kils both our fame, and our soules*: it gives us wounds, which will never admit of healing. How many have irrecoverably lost their good names, by keeping company with suspected persons? and whether the report be true or false, it is no easie thing to disprove a slander, for like an unruly spirit once raised, 'tis hard to conjure down again. A mans good name is much easier kept, then recovered.

And thus you see, that evil *company endangers our soules*: or could our souls be free, yet our persons are in *danger*; or could our souls and persons both be safe, yet our estates are in *jeopardy*, or could our souls, bodies and estates be secure, yet our *fame* would suffer, and our *good name* lie at the stake. Wherefore, &c.

§. 28.

Fourthly, But admit we could keep them company without harm ; yet this inconvenience would ensue, their company vwould bereave us of much good, which otherwise we shoulde enjoy, being alone; it faring with the godly wise, as with St. Ambrose, who was wont to say, *I am never less alone, then when I am all alone, for then I can enjoy the presence of my God without interruption.* They are able to say, as Dubartus, and (before him) Scipio, *I have never better company, then when I have no company, for then can I freely entertain my own thoughts, and converse with all the learned, which have been in former ages.*

Antisthenes being asked what fruit he had reaped of all his study? made answer, *I have learned by it, both to live, and walk with my self.* And Alphonsius King of Arragon, being demanded, what company he liked best, replied, *Books, for these (saith he) without fear, or flattery, or any reward, tell me faithfully all that I desire to know.* Cicero was, and I am of his mind, and though I be no Hermit, to sit away my daies in a dull Cell, yet will I chuse rather to have no companion, then a bad one.

When Cato utican, in vacation times, and at his best leisure, went to recreate himself in the countrey, he used to carry with him the best Philosophers, and choicest books. *Algerius an Italian Martyr said, He had rather be in prison with Cato, then with Cæsar in the Senate house:* so was it more comfortable, to be with Philpot in his Cole-house, then with Bonner in the Palace : Bonners conscience made his Palace a Cole-house, and a dungeon; whiles Philpot made the Cole-house a Palace. The state of grace is heaven upon earth ; and he that knows the sweetnes of Gods presence, will deeme it more tolerable to be ever alone, then never able to be so.

When I read of Hiero the Tyrant of Syracusa, and other such, that gave over their Kingdoms, to live a solitary life, I somewhat wonder : I shoulde not, to hear of a religious and Christian King that did so. It is impossible for the natural man to be so merry in company, as the believer alone; yea, saith S. Augustine, *the tears of those that pray, are sweeter then the joyes of the Theatre.* Indeed, a witty jest may make a man laugh more, and louder : but he who hath an inheritance fallen to him, feels a more solid joy within : so he that enjoys his Saviour, and hath the assurance of heaven, is truly merry at the heart, and keeps Hilary Term all his life. And indeed, nothing in the world is worth envy, besides the condition of a true Christian.

But to what end do I tell a blind man how glorious and bright a creature the Sun is ? or a poor man, what sums of money are in the Kings Exchequers ? To so many as are unrenewed I speake in Parables, Rev. 2. 17. Yea, this seems to them a Paradox, that the people of God should be a merry people : for contrariwise, they dream of nothing but solitariness and melancholy : as the common people thought Tully to be most idle, when he studied most : or as the husbandman in Aesop objected idleness to the Poet : but as he replied, *I am never so idle as in thy company, so may the religious, we are never so solitary, never so melancholy, as when in society with you that are vicious.* This was Davids case, which maketh him cry out, *No is me, that I must re-*

main in Meseck, and dwell in the tents of Kedar : he found it a heavy yoke to be yoked with irreligious companions.

And a double reason may be given of it, though we fear not to suffer either in our persons, goods, or good names (as before you have it.) For first, the soul that lives among thorns, shall hardly thrive, they are such back-byasses to a godly life, that they will do what they can, to hinder our goodness to heaven, and the goodness of heaven to us; they will wither all our good parts and qualities which are in us; like an evil North-wind, they blow upon the buds of our graces, and nip them.

Secondly, It would make a mans heart to bleed, to hear and consider, how swearing, blaspheming, cursed speaking, railing, flandering, quarrelling, contending, jesting, mocking, scoffing, flattering, lying, dissembling, vain, corrupt and filthy holding, scurrilous, loose and idle talking, doth overflow with them in all places : so that such as fear God, had better be any where than in the company of most men. Now I were mad if I should so affect company as to live voluntarily where vexations shall daily salute me.

Indeed, a man is not rightly said to live, until he hath abandoned wicked society. Similis having lived seven years apart from the World, after a long time spent in a military life, he left this Epitaph behind him, *Here lies old Similis, yet one that lived but seven years.* This made Frederick the third, Elector Palatine, when some such friends of his desired his company, to answer, *I have lived long enough to you ; let me now live to my self, and with my Lord Christ.* Yea St. Augustine, ten daies before he died, desired none might come to him, that so, in that time, he might the better fit himself for God. And indeed that soul can never enjoy God, that is not sometimes retired.

O that we could, in any reasonable time, give a stop to our madding and straying fancies : that we could, after so long time spent in the lusts of the flesh, and pride of life, bring home our cogitations and intentions unto ourselves, shake off these violent hold-fasts, bid our companions farewell, which have too long engaged our souls, and estranged us from our selves.

But when we are so wedded, combined, and glued to the world, it is no ease matter to make a safe retreat : it is a fleing to some to be fundered ; thereby you pull away some piece of themselves.

In this case, what we cannot do all at once, let us gain upon our selves by degrees; go back step by step; first, block up one passage, then another. Will you know what course Demosthenes took in this case ? He, to the end that his acquaintance and nearest friends might not (by carrying him abroad, according to their custom) withdraw him from his study and books, caused the hair of his head to be shaved off; and after took an order, that they should not peep out, until he had shook off his consorts, by continually making them lose their labours. It were happy for our young students, if they would a little imitate him; if they were not overmuch affected and addicted to company keeping; if they would but consider, that friends are the thieves of time, the most precious jewel they can part withal.

§. 29.

But here it will be objected. That we are melancholy persons, strayed from the drove of mankind, and whereas nature hath made us sociable

creatures, in making us men, religion hath altered to a crazed disposition, whereby we are displeasing to all, as all to us.

To this is answered, Suppose it were true (but I shall in place more convenient prove, that the religious only enjoy true mirth, and that worldly mirth is more talked of then felt, spiritual joy more felt then talked of, though I may appeal to any mans conscience, that hath been softned with the unction of grace, and truly *tasted the powers of the world to come*) yet they think it is better being a good Christian, then a good fellow; and hold it far better, in good fadnes to be saved with a few, as Noah was in the Ark, then in good fellowship, with the multitude, to be drowned in sin, and damned for company.

We are content (saith one) to pass through somewhat more unsociably, into happiness; it sufficeth we shall meet with good company at our journeys end, in the Kingdom of heaven, even an innumerable company of Saints and Angels.

The men of the world practise, what once a Jester spake, who, when a great Lord asked him, whether he would go to heaven or hell? answered, *to hell,* for there (quoth he) *I shall be sure to meet your Lordship, and the greatest part of mine acquaintance.* But it is not so with the true Christian: he little loves Christ, that will not follow him without company: and his zeal is cold to heaven, whom the example of numbers can turn another way. Wherefore let us say, as much as Peter said, and do more then Peter did; *though all men should forsake thee, yet will I not leave thee, O Saviour:* neither magnitude of Princes, nor multitude of people shall prevail with me.

But the world wrongs religion, when they accuse it to be an enemy to good-fellowship: for she hath not a follower, which doth not say with David, Psal. 119. 63. *I am a companion to all them that fear thee, and keep thy Precepts;* for the godly mans chief delight is in the Saints, and such as excel in virtue, Psal. 16. 3. Yea, and their fellowship is so good, profitable and delectable, that as *Synefus* was of opinion, that King Hieron got more by Simonides acquaintance, then Simonides did by his; and as we read that Pharaoh, Saul and Nebuchadnezzar were more pleased by Joseph, David, and Daniel, then Daniel, David and Joseph were by them: so I perswade my self, great persons would find themselves more then required, if they would vouchsafe the company of some poor Saints: for a wise and holy Christian (like his Lord and Master) wheresoever he goes, makes better cheer then he finds, in an happy exchange of spiritual repast for bodily. Yea, as *Plato* accounted it one of the four great priviledges, for which he was especially bound to nature, *that he lived in the time of Socrates:* so they should think it none of the least favours, for which they were bound to bless God, that they enjoyed so religious and holy society.

It is true indeed, there is a supposed good fellowship, to which religion is an enemy; because it is an enemy to this holy fellowship of the Saints: and good reason, the one are to the other, as wolves are to the lambs: now is it any marvel if the Lambs care not greatly for the company of the Wolves? the Lamb would not willingly be alone; yet it is far better when solitary, then in a wolfish society.

Generous minds will associate with their matches and equals, or none: as David being a King, when he was expuls'd his own Country, refers to none

but Kings : for first he goeth to Achish, King of Gath ; then to the King of Moab, 1 Sam. 21.10. & 1 Sam. 22.3.

Neither are our ding-thirsts, who lavish out their estates, and throw the house out at windows (as we use to say) good fellows, though they call themselves so: for good fellows and evil men are incompatible; like Simeon and Levi, sworn brothers, but brethren in evil; which is too evil a brotherhood, for an honest man to make one in, or (indeed) a wise man : for is not he a fool, that will sell Heaven for company, as a great many true drunkards do? For my own part, if I have good company, I will cherish them, as Lot did his Angels, which were sent for guardians : if I have any bad, I will study to lose them, lest by keeping them, I lose my self in the end.

§. 30.

Fifthly, Another reason why we should separate our selves from their society, is, that according to the Apostles rule, so far as is possible, we may have peace with all men, which is no way attainable, but by a separation. A wicked man (saith Solomon) is abomination to the just : and he that is upright in his way, is abomination to the wicked, Prov. 29.27. If so, either no communion, or no peace.

Believers, and such as are enemies to the Cross of Christ, can never be reconciled, at least in heart. What communion can righteousness have with unrighteousness? You may as well tie a sure knot between a cobweb and a cable, as a true and fast love-knot between the child of God and a wicked man. These two yoked together, agree like the harp and the harrow: they are as suitable, as a wooden Leg, and a Thigh of flesh: which makes the Apostle, Rom. 12.18. in enjoying us to have peace with all men, to add, if it be possible : and in another place to say, be not unequally yoked with infidels, for as we should not be yoked with infidels, so we should not be yoked with common drunkards, and syyearers, nor with Atheists, which are no better than infidels, for that also is to be unequally yoked, unless we be Atheists too.

As the Jews might not comfort vvith the Canaanites: so vve may not consort vvith them, which are like Canaanites. Wise Solomon chargeth us from God, that we should not keep company with gluttons and drunkards, Prov. 23. 20. and the Apostle enjoineth us, not to have any fellowship, nor so much as eat with a drunkard, 1 Cor. 5.11. and that we should have no fellowship with these unfruitful works of darkness, or, if unwittingly, and unwillingly we be thrust into any such society, we must not imitate, but reprove them, Eph. 5.11. and we profess our selves the servants of God : now they are bad servants, who will keep company with their Masters enemies, especially, after he hath streightly charged them to the contrary.

Alas! what should we do in the presence of base persons, when even our sober ignorance, in ill courses, is more then dis-esteemed of the world? Yea, when it is not enough for them to be bad themselves, except they rail at the good? when if there be one in a company, that abhors impious language, they will blaspheme on purpose to vex him? when they will think themselves slighted, if they be not sent away drunk? When to depart sober, is held incivility? And we cannot talk idly enough, nor do lewdly enough, to bear them company; we

can neither say as they say, nor be silent when we see & hear their baseness. As whom would it not stir, to hear oaths strive for number, with words ; scoffs, with oaths ; vain speeches, with both ? we love neither to bite, nor fawn ; yet we cannot forbear to speak the naked truth ; which if we do, will breed a quarrel. As for instance ; one jests pleasantly with his Maker ; another, makes himself sport with Scripture ; a third, fills his mouth with oaths of sound ; a fourth, scoffs at the religious ; one, speaks villany ; another, laughs at it ; a third defends it ; one, makes himself a swine, another, a devil. Now who, that is not all earth, can endure it ? Yea, who, having grace, can hear such wickedness, and feeleth not some spark of holy indignation arise in him, while he thinks of it ? Or who, having not lost his spiritual sent, can endure the favour of such noisom and stinking breath, as their rotten lungs send forth. Well born children are touched to the quick with the injuries of their Parents : and not thus to be moved, is to confess our selves bastards. Indeed, men of steel stomacks can digest any discourse, though never so coarse, but the gracious know, that as they must render an account for every idle word, so likewise for their idle silence ; for in this case not to reprove them either by word, or gesture, is to do the same things in judgment and conscience, which the other doth actually. Every evil we see doth either vex, or infect us. The very sight of sin makes a man either sad, or guilty ; if we see it, and be not sorrowful, we are sinful. If Lot had not been vexed with the beastly Sodomites, God had been vexed with him : yea, in such a case not to be very angry, is to make God very angry. Ely heard of his sons impiety, no doubt with grief enough, but not with anger enough ; therefore he is punished with hearing of their destruction, that was too remiss in hearing of their transgression. It is easie to be guilty of anothers wickedness, even our very permission appropriates crimes to us : we need no more guiltiness of any sin, then our willing tolleration. All sins which we give allowance to, being committed, or not hindered by us, if we may, are ours, as if we committed them : 1. Commanders ; 2. Abbettors ; 3. Counsellors ; 4. Contenters ; 5. Commanders ; 6. Connivers ; 7. Concealers ; 8. Not hinderers ; each of these will be found guilty before Gods Tribunal. What saith the Prophet to King Jehosaphat, *wouldst thou help the wicked, and not only so, but wouldest thou love them that hate the Lord ? therefore for this thing, the wrath of the Lord is upon thee,* 2 Chron. 19. 2. We need do no more to bring the wrath of God upon us, then even to love and favour those which hate him.

How much better then to oppose thy friend by reproofing him, then that God should reprove thee for being at one with him.

But this is no friendly part : yes, the Scripture affirms, that not to tell ones Brother plainly of his fault, at least, if there be probability of doing good, is to bite him in his heart, Lev. 19. 17. And Philosophy tells us, that is truly perfect love, which, to profit and do good, feareth not to hurt or offend ; that admonitions and corrections are the chiefest offices of friendship. Diogenes when they called him Dog, for his sharp kind of rebuking, would answer, That other Dogs used to bite their enemies, but be his friends, for their greater good. And Scipio, the elder, when his friends, for so doing, turned his enemies, was able to say, I have given mine enimies as much cause to love me, as my friends.

Phocion when a friend of his would have cast himself away, would not suffer him, saying, *I was made thy friend for this purpose: and to King Antipater, Thou canst not have me both for thy friend and flatterer.* Indeed, a flattering friend is a bitter enemy, yea, (as one sweetly) no enemy can be so mortal, as those officious Clyents, whose flattery sooths a man up in wickedness! for they are traitors to the soul, and by a pleasing violence kill the best part eternally. Whence Euripides exhorts men to get such friends, as would not spare to displease them, saying, friends are like wines, those that bring new are hard and harsh, prove best; the most pleasing, are least lasting: and indeed, he that loves not such a friend, hates himself.

A wise man will say to his friend, love heartily, and then speak what thou wilt. And for a man not to chide his friend, least he should offend him, is as if (when he were ready to be drowned) he should fear to catch him by the hair of the head, lest he should lose a few of them. Wherefore either let them abide thee no friend to their faults, or no friend to themselves.

And what if admonition and reproof be as unwelcome to thy friend, as water into a ship? what if it sound no better to him, than musick out of tune or taste no sweeter, than bitter pills, which sick men take with an unwilling willingness? wilt thou neglect the office of a friend, to avoid the suspicion of an enemy? Indeed, if thou meet with a contentious fool, thou shalt do wisely, in not answering whatsoever he objects: for it is more policy and discretion to gain a friend without trouble, than a foe with it: and our Saviour saith, Give ye not that which is holy to Dogs, neither cast ye your pearl before Swine; lest they tread them under their feet, and turning again all to rent you, Mat. 7. 6.

Again, as in Gods & their own behalf we are bound to reprove them: so in our neighbours also, to whom, in this case, we owe a duty: for, admit we are in company when, and where our brothers good name is taken away by false report; it is our duty to defend the truth, in his behalf: we must neither backbite others, nor be willing to give ear unto backbiters of others. It was an honest speech of one; as I will be my present friends self, so I'll be my absent friends deputy, to say for him what he would, and cannot speak for himself. Well then, you may but

little concerns them?

My answer shall be such another question. What needed Moses to have afflicted himself with the afflictions of others, that he might work their deliverance when himself was at ease and pleasure in the Court of Pharaoh? what needed Jonathan to purchase his fathers displeasure, and brought his own life into so much jeopardy, that he might justify David in his uprightness, and save his life themselves? What needed Calvin, in the year 1556, when Perin had conspired against him to see one estate of Geneva, have run into the midst of their naked swords, to appease them with death and tumult? what needs the hand cast it self betwixt a blow and the head, though peace to it be cut off by this mean? What needs the eye serve more to the use of the other members, in being watchful rightly to direct them, then for it self? A good heart cannot abide to be happy alone; which is a religious answer to her again reasonable question unreasonably moved. Yea, admit it were not a duty for a false A

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God had not enjoyed us so to do : I am sure it is a pardonable fault, to do less good to our selves, that we may do more good to and for others.

But suppose we offend them not this way ; yet we shall another, if we keep them company. The natural man conceits of himself, far beyond what another esteemeth him : and in case he finds he is undervalued, will flie in your face, and perhaps do you more mischief, than can easily be repaired : as that was done in one quarter of an hour by our first Parents, which tended to the ruine of them, and all mankind. It is usual with drunkards to kifs when they meet, and kill when they part. Drunken Alexander killed Clytus, for whom sober Alexander would have kil'd himself. The Danes and Norways once purposing for England, fell drunk on shipboard, and so slayst one another, that there was an end of their voyage. Out of their gallant disposition, you shal have one kill another, upon the interpretation of a word ; a manifest confession, that their life is not much worth, sith they will sell it so good cheap : yea, there are not wanting of them that resemble Fimbria of Rome, who meeting a Citizen that he hated, gave him a deadly thrust into the body with his sword, and the next day entred an action against him, that he had received but part of his blade into his body, and not all, as he meant it.

Yea, perhaps they may make you to do that which you never dreameft of : like Herod, who cut off John Baptist's head, only to answer the expectation of the standers by, Mat. 14. 9. As for flattery it never wants welcome, while self-love, is at home : but the plain dealing man cannot live among these Vipers, and not be stung by them : yea, he lives most in trouble, that most seeks to have peace with them by a familiarity.

Well then, if they are so offensive to the stomach of our company, that they will not let us be at peace ; our best way will be to spew them out, to deal with our old vicious consorts, as the Fox in the Fable did by his fleas : who wading backward into the water : by degrees, drew them all into a lock of Wool, which he had in his mouth, and then left it swimming ; even leave them, without troubling leave of them ; or if you like not to tear friendship asunder upon the sudden, you may unsow it by little and little. He that would not continue a friend may but neglect him ; and have his aynt.

§. 31.

Only But I hear none boast so much of peace, as the ungodly ; nor none taxed so with contention, as the religious.

Answ. Boast of it they may, but it is apparent that the way of peace they have life, is not so much as known : indeed, they have some kind of agreement among themselves, and so have Serpents, and Bears, and Wolves : it is a rare thing, n't to see one Wolf devour, or fight with another : yea, they have made a covenant also with death, and are at an agreement with Hell, Isa. 28. 15. and yet : as there is peace to the wicked, Isa. 57. 21. so there is no peace among the wicked ; for of the very combination in evil, is rebellion, and not peace ; rather a conspiracy, then self-concord ; like the agreement of Absalom and Achitophel, combining together against David ; or of Herod and Pilate, conspiring against Christ ; or of the false Apostles, plotting against Paul, so meeting in malice to do mischief : and that a godly dissension is better than such a wicked peace.

Neither can any wonder, that wicked men do so conspire in evil, that there is such unanimity in the *broachers* and *abettors* of it ; if he but take notice of those Devils, which being many in substance, were yet one in name, action, habitation, even a whole legion in one man, *Mar. 5.9.* all the praise of concord in the subject; if that be holy, the consent is angelical ; if sinful, devillish; true peace is to have peace with God, war with our lust, *Rom. 5.1. &c 7.22, 23.* peace with virtue, war with vice : whereas they have peace and are at league with their sins, but are at war with God, and good men all at once; but a just war is a thousand times better than such an ill conditioned peace ; yea, it no way deserves the name of peace, except we be at enmity with the Serpent, at unit within our selves: we ought so to be at peace with men, as that we do not war with God and his graces : peace must be followed with holiness, *Heb. 12.1.* Wherefore Zachary joyneth faith, peace, and truth together, *Zach. 8.16.* and St. Paul, *peace and righteousness, peace and edification, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. 14.17, 19, 20, &c.* Thus the Scripture sets us our bounds for peace, which we may not pass; and shews that ungodly men are not guilty of this grace ; that they do but talk of peace, not practise it.

But suppose we could enjoy peace in their company; yet we can never expect to have their loves: for drunkards only love drunkards, and one wicked man another; but care not a rush for any that are good: being like Phalaris the Tyrant, who would never grant any request, except it were to a dissolute woman, but such he never denied. Likeness we know is the cause of love, and love the cause of likeness ; whereas the believer and the unbeliever are altogether unlike ; the one being crucified and dead to the world, *Gal. 6.14.* but made alive in Christ, *1 Cor. 15.22.* The other being spiritually dead, even while they are alive, *1 Tim. 5.6.*

We seldom see different dispositions entirely loving : for hence grows the height of friendship, when two similiary souls do blend in their commixion & hence it is, that two friends are said to come into Vulcan's shop, to beg the boon of him: that he would either beat them on his Anvile, or melt them in his Furnace both into one, the which he granted. It's likeness that makes the true love knot of friendship: when we find another of our own disposition, appears the same soul in a divided body. Nature that makes us love our selves makes us, with the same reason, love those that are like us. A friend is a more sacred name than a Brother, *Prov. 18.24.* For what avails it to have the bodies from the same original, when the souls within them differ ?

And yet some (*Rehobam-like*) passing over the religious, will joyn themselves with ungodly persons ; like as some put away honest wives, and go harlots : wherein they deal as wisely, as if a man should cast away his flesh, leg, and set on another of wood.

Causa patrocinio non bona peior erit.

Or admit thou shouldst enjoy a wicked mans love; it is but mercenary, base, and inconstant, & so not worth the having. Indeed, there was never such abject and servile prostitutions of presentations, as life, soul, devotion, adoration, servant, slave, &c. as there is now amongst our drunkards and roarers, at what love they express to one, they profess to all ; every one they know,

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against evil Society.

salute, is their friend : but friendship so distracted, like as the River *Ganges* was by *Cyrus*, into 365 brooks, both loses her name and nature : a lover of so many, never loves any.

Or, admit a drunkard do love thee; either he loves thee for his own sake, because he hath some pleasure, or profit, or credit by thee, (as prosperity procurer friends, no less than adversity provereth them) which is, with *Craterus*, to love the King, rather then with *Ephesians*, to love *Alexander* : now I do not hold him worthy thanks, that professeth me kindness for his own ends.

Or secondly, he loves only thy body or natural parts, which is but the worst piece of thee ; and love to the body, is but the body of love ; the soul of love, is the love of the soul.

Neither doth he truly love, that loves the body more than the mind and soul, or common gifts before saving graces; this love as it's never long liv'd, so it's oft but feigned; as you shall have drunkards & dissembling politicians salute one another, with *God save you*, at their meeting ; and with one another hanged, at their parting; *Italians*-like, they will be glorious and complemental in their invitations, but if you accept of their offer, they will hate you for it ever after. A drinking friendship, is but a drunken friendship : and believe it, thou wilt find those friends firmest, that thy vertues purchase thee: these will love thee when thy wealth is gone: whereas those that be won without desert, will also be lost without a cause: you need but be an Arbitrator between two such friends to make them both your enemies: things that differ in their end, will surely part in their way : now thy end, is to gain him ; his end, to make a gain of thee: for let the passage of profit be stopt, his love is likewise at a stand: have you deserved never so well from him, the denial of one favour, nay, an health, shall drown the memory of many fore-performed ones: which is all one as if for the abortion of one child, a man should kill all the former issue: whereas the good mans thanks for old favours, lives even in the blows of injury: or can you not feed these vermin as you have done, away they go; like a Sun Dial, you shall be no longer regarded, then you are shined on by prosperity: yea, Rats run not faster away from an house on fire; nor lice from a dead body, than they from poverty : and if ever it be your misery to stand in need of them, look for no other requital, then *Job* had of his friends, whom he compares to a deceitful Brook, which in Winter is hard frozen with cold, in Summer dried up with heat ; between Winter and Summer passing away alwaies deceitful, never of use, *Job* 6.14.to 19.

Yea, a man may say of such friends, as a learned Antiquary said of *Rumney* Marsh, *bad in Winter, hurtful in Summer, never good*; nay, this comparison falls short, for thou hast sped well, if such friends prove not dangerously hurtful, as well as helpless. Have I not known som: of them resemble the snake, which when a kind husbandman had taken out of the cold, and cherished in his bosom, and she had recovered her lively heat, and was grown lusty, singled out him ungratefully to try her first sting upon ? or a Promootor, that in Lent eats flesh at your table, and yet is the first that accuseth thee to the Magistrate. If *Ziba* be waxed great under *Mephiboseth*, he will give him a lift for all he hath. A promoted Beggar hath not seldom renounced his advance.

And what else can be looked for from them? They cannot make conscience of civil duties, who make none of divine. If a man have cast off his God, he will easily cast off his friend. They that have broken their faith with him, will keep no faith with us. When Religion is once gone, Humanity will not stay long after.

I take leave of this point, with a caution. Reveal to such men no secrets; for he that now loves thee dearly, may come to hate thee deadly: nor believe a word that they say; for they are like *Axigones*, who never denied any sute, that was asked; but withal, never performed any thing that he granted; for what they promise when they are drunk, they forget when they are sober; or like *Saul*, who being perswaded of *Davids* worth and loyalty, swears, *as the Lord liveth he shall not die*, 1 Sam. i 9, 6. yet within four verses, for all his oath, he daits a Spear at him, intending to nail him to the wall; and in the next verse, he sends messengers to his house to kill him; or like the Council of *Constance*, who made promise to *John Husse* of a conduct and safe return; yet, like forsworn persecutors, put him to death.

§. 32.

OB. But here some of them will reply. That we lay the saddle upon the wrong horse, when we tax them for want of peace, love, and friendship; in that the religious only shew inconstancy, by bidding farewell to their old friends and acquaintance, so soon as they embrace religion.

Anf. To this is answered, First, that constancy, except it be in the truth and in a good cause, is impudency: change in the vicious is as great a virtue, as constancy in the virtuous. The *Almains* were praised for changing their customs, which were found to be but bad before, as *Tacitus* affirmeth. Constancy in things ill, is so far from being a virtue, that it is an absolute vice. Of things imperfect, change is the way to perfect them. The *Gentiles* became believers, the *Jews* Infidels, *Zachetus* turns from the world, *Demas* turns to the world, *Paul* turns an Apostle, *Judas* an Apostate: I would fain know, whether change in the *Gentiles*, *Zachetus* and *Paul*, was not as great a virtue, as it was a vice in the *Jews*, *Demas*, and *Judas*?

S. Paul was inconstant indeed; for to day (as it were) he breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the Disciples of Christ, and to morrow he preached Christ in the Synagogue: what then? Will any (not debauched) censure him of sickleness for it? nay, will not all wise men think it a great honour to him, and commend him for shaking hands with the high Priests, and his fellow Pursevants, when once he heard that voice from Heaven? *Acta 9. 4.*

There is not any so near unto us, but if he fall from God, we may fall from him. It merits the name of vivilfulness, when we will not admit of a lawfull change to the better.

As *Philocrates* sported with *Demosthenes*: you may not marvel *Atbenians*, that *Demosthenes* and I do differ, for he drinks water, and I drink wine: so some laugh at us for being sober with Rhenish; and we as much pity them, for being drunk with Canary. Again, they censure us of inconstancy; we them of impudency. Never in this case when that is reputed ridiculous by one, which is accounted sage by another as wise; what shall we do, but make Gods

Word the unspier? Wherefore, in all changes, I will have regard to these three things, God's approbation, mine own benefit, and the not harming of my neighbour; and then where the change is not a fault, I will never think it a disgrace, though the great exchange, the World, should judge it so.

Even modesty, in some, is a vice; when out of a weak flexibility of nature, a man hath not courage enough, to deny the request of a seeming friend.

If a man never abandoneth evil, untill he abandoneth evil company, it is high time to take courage: yea, the longer we have been with them, the more need have we to hasten out of them. If this satisfie not, as the Emperour Frederick said to certain of his Minions, that were importunate to get into their hands the ancient deimes of the Empire, that he would rather be accounted of small liberality, then perfid! even so had we, in this case rather be accounted inconstant, than be unconscionable.

To the second part of the objection, I ansver, That true love and friendship is only among good men. The wicked may talk of it, and one drunkard may profess to another, that he loves him as well as himself; and therein speak truth, for saith Augustine most elegantly to such an one, thou lovest thy self, so as thou wilt destroy thy self; and thou wilt destroy him whom thou lovest as thy self; yea, better then themselves; for you shall have one Ruffian salute another with, God save you Sir, but after some strange attestations, swear avay himself with, God damn me Sir: now how can any wise man think him a friend, that is his evn enemy? he that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good?

But see the depth of such a mans love, and whether it be not to damn thy body and soul everlastinglly. St. Ambrose tells us of one, vvhō sollicited a godly vwoman to incontinency, saying, he infinitely loved her: she ansvered, if you love me so well as you seem, put one of your fingers into the flame, till your flesh be burnt off: he replies, that w̄s no part of love in her to require it: yes, said she, if yours be love, to cause both my body and soul to be burnt in hell fire, for ever, which by consequence will follow, if I yield to your request, and take your counsel. Oh that thou hadst the wit to ansver the drunkard when he tempts thee thus.

Indeed there is a kind of agreement, which is strengthened by sin it self: as if one see the keeper of a wench, his secrecy is bought for ever. But all this while, if one call another, friend, it is but to give him a nick-name, whereof he is not guilty: for true friendship is so sacred, holy, and pure, that it vwill not be used in evil: vwhich made Pericles, vwhen he was desired by a friend of his, to aide him with false witness, ansver, that he would befriend him as far as the Altar, meaning so far, as stood with piety and religion, or his duty to God, but no further; and Phocion refuse to help his son in law Caviles in judgment, being accused for bribery, saying vviehal, that he had made him his friend and allie in just and reasonable matters, and in them only; and this likevise made Papinius, a Pagan, (being commanded by the Emperor Caracalla, vwhose Servard and familiar he was) refuse to defend at unjust cause, (as Marcellinus records) and thus it fares with all that are truly religious. There is not any one (quoth the sincere Christian) either in bloud, or otherwize so near unto me, but if he fal from God, I vwill fall from him: vwhy? our Saviour Christ hath

Armour of proof

hath taught me, both by Precept and Example, that I should acknowledge none (so as to be led by them) for my brother, sister, or mother, but such as do the will of my Father, which is in Heaven, Mat. 12. 46, to 51.

Whereas on the contrary, in things lawful, nothing rivets hearts so close, as religion : it unites them together as glew doth boards together : it makes a knot, even between such as never saw one another's face, that Alexander cannot cut : yea, Tyrants will sooner want invention for torments, than they with tortures be made treacherous. How many have chosen rather to embrace the flames, then to reveal their companions, and brethren in Christ ? There is no friendship like the friendship of faith. There is Amor, among Beasts ; Dilectio, among Men ; Charitas, among Christians, that is their peculiar: nature makes husband and wife but one flesh; grace makes them even one spirit: and it is a question, whether natural Parents are to be loved above spiritual : we know that Christ preferred his spiritual kindred, to that of the flesh; and major est connexio cordium, quam sanguinum, saith Bez. Why should we love them more, that brought us into this sinful and miserable world ; then those, that bring us into a better world, where is neither sin, nor misery ? Why them, that live with us on earth but a while ; equal to them, that shall live with us in Heaven for ever ?

But to go on. Surely, as grace in her self is far above nature: so is she likewise in her effects; and consequently, unites in a far more durable bond. Christians hearts are joyned one to another, with so fast a glew, that no by respects can sever them: as you may see in that pair of friends, Jonathan and David: none had so much cause to disaffect David, as Jonathan ; none in all Israel, should be such a loser by David's success, as he; Saul was sure enough settled for his time, only his successor should forgo all that which David should gain ; so none but David stands in Jonathan's way to the Crown; and yet all this cannot abate one dram of his love. As also in Ruth and Naomi, whom nothing, but death could part, Ruth 1. If you will see other examples, look Rom. 1. 10, 11. 1 Thes. 2. 17, 19, 20. Gal. 4. 18, 19. Acts 20. 37, 38. & 16. 15. Luke 4. 42. 2 Kings 2. 4, 9. & 4. 9, 10. As grace is the greatest attractive of love ; so is it the surest bond ; it is like varnish, that makes feelings not only shine, but last. Where God uniteth hearts, carnal respects are too weak to disiever them ; since that which breaks off affection, must needs be stronger than that which conjoyneth it, and why doth St. John use these words, once to the elect Lady, 2. John 1. 2. and again to Gaius, 3. John 1. Whom I love in the truth, but to shew, that to love in the truth, is the only true love ? Indeed, Religion is the surest cement of all societies ; the looser joynts of all natural and civil relations, are compacted and confirmed by the sinews of grace and religion : and such a loose joyned friendship cannot hold long, which wants the nerves of Religion. Wherefore give me any foe, rather than a resolved Christian ; no friend unless a man truly honest. §. 33.

But here it will be objected. That we hate and contemn all, who are not like our selves : that we remember them so much to be sinners, that, in the mean time, we forget them to be men and brethren.

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they are conscious of both alike. A charitable heart, even where it hates, there it wisheth that it might have cause to love : his anger and indignation against sin, is alwaies joyned with love and commisera^tion towards the sinner, as is lively set out, *Mark 3.5. & Phil. 3.18.* Where St. Paul tells us of them, (weeping) that are enemies to the Cross of Christ : & *Mark 3.5.* That our Saviour, while he looked on the Pharisees angrily, mourned for the hardness of their hearts. Zeal is a compounded affection of love and anger. When Moses was angry with the Israelites, and chid them sharply, at the same time he prayed for them heartily. And Jonathan, when he was angry with his Father, for vowed Davids death, did still retain the duty and love, both of a Son to his Father, and of a Subject to his Sovereign. A good man cannot speak of them without passion, and compassion : yea, they weep not so much for their own sins, as we do (according to S. Chrysostomes example) O that our prayers and tears could but recover them.

Those that are truly gracious, know how to receive the blessings of God, without contempt of them who want ; and have learned to be thankful, without overlineſs ; knowing themselves to have been, or may be, as wretched and undeserving, as S. Augustine speaks. A true Christian can distinguish between persons and vices, offenders and offences ; and have no peace with the one, while he hath true peace with the other ; love them, as men, hate them, as evil men ; love, what they are, not what they do ; as God made them, not as they have made themselves ; not so hate, as to be a sore to goodness ; nor so love, as to foster iniquity. It is a question, whether is worst of the two, to be vices friend, or virtues enemy. Now saith Augustine, *He is not angry with his brother, that is angry with the sin of his brother :* yea, if we hate the vices of a wicked man, and love his person, as the Physician hateth the disease, but leaveth the person of the diseased, there is nothing more praise-worthy, as saith the same Father. And another, *It is the honest mans commendation to condemn a vile person.* And another, *I know no greater argument of goodness, than the hatred of wickedness, in whomsoever it resides :* yea, David makes it a note of his integrity, *Psal. 31.6. & 139.21,22. & 26.4,5. & in Psal. 15.* He is bold to ask the Lord this question, *Who shall dwell in thy Tabernacle, who shall rest in thy holy Mountain ?* The answer he receives is this ; 1. *He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness.* 2. *And speaketh the truth from his heart.* 3. *He that slandereth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbour, nor receiveth a false report against his neighbour.* But the fourth is ; *He, in whose eyes a vile person is contumacious, while he honoureth him that feareth the Lord :* and he cannot be sincere who doth not honour virtue in rags, and loath vice, though in a robe of State. So that, as the Prophet asked Jerebaphat, *2 Chro. 19.2. Wouldest thou help the wicked, and love them that hate the Lord ?* it may be demanded, should Christians be friends with them who are enemies to the Cross of Christ ? no, no. And yet to the men, separate from their manners, we have no quarrel, but wish them better, then they either wish to us, or to themselves.

Indeed, if we should contemn them, as they think we do ; it were but a just compence of their folly & wickedness : for as one speaking of the poverty of

the purse, saith, that poverty is justly contemptible, which is purchased by following of vice: so may I, of the poverty of the mind; that poverty of virtue and grace is justly contemptible, which is purchased by a wilful rebellion against God, and the great means of knowledge and grace which we enjoy. To conclude this point, we think its better to leave them, and be thought proud wrongfully; then stay with them, and be known bad, certainly.

§. 34.

Again, some will alledge we give offence to them that are without, which is contrary to the Apostles precept, who saith, Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Grecians, nor to the Church of God, 1 Cor. 10.32. as they will make a crooked staff serve to beat a Dog, when a straight one cannot be found.

Nothing but ignorance is guilty of this scruple: for the offence is only taken, not given: and herein they pervert the Apostles words, touching offences, as Pharaohs servants did the same word, when they said unto their Master concerning Moses, How long shall he be an offence unto us? Exod. 10.7. For he meaneth in that place, only such offences as are contrary to the doctrine of the Gospel, as he hath expounded his own meaning, Rom. 16.17. And if nothing might be done, whereat wicked men are offended, then the word of God must not be preacht, nor his holy and divine precepts walked in, yea, Christ must not have come into the world to redeem it; for he was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, 1 Cor. 1.23. But all which God hath commanded must be done; and all which he hath left indifferent, may be done, and none may, or ought to censure the doing of it. The precept is plain, one believeth that he may eat of all things; and another which is weak, eateth herbs, saith the Apostle, and what follows? let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, condemn him that eateth; for God hath received him, Rom. 14.2,3.

If I know the thing to be good, and that I do it to a good end, what care I for their idle misse-construction? morally good actions must not be suspended, upon danger of causeless scandal: in things indifferent and arbitrary, it is fit to be over-ruled by fear of offence: but if men will stumble in the plain ground of good, let them fall without our regard, nor without their own peril.

Now that the Cuckow may acknowledge this for her own egge, notwithstanding she hath laid it in the Doves nest; let the men of the world know, that it is not an offence given by us, but taken by them; yea, they first give an offence to us by their ungodliness, and after take the just reward of the same, namely, to be excluded our society for an offence, wherein they imitate Athanagorus, who (as Tully reporteth) would alwaies complain of his punishment, but of his fault he would say nothing: or Adam, who was ashamed of his nakedness, but not of his sin; wicked men are neither sensible of doing injury, nor patie in suffering for it. It's a rule of Justice, that what men deserve, they shoul suffer: yea, in this particular case, Gods rule is, if thou take away the precious from the viles, thou shalt be according to my word, Jer. 15.19. And we wod have them suffer this exclusion no longer, then till they deserve it no more: let them return unto us (do as themistocles, who being in his youth vicious debt

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deceitful, afterwards made the world amends, by his brave exploits;) and we will return unto them, keep them company, account them true friends, good men: otherwise we have an absolute prohibition from God himself, *Jer. 15.19.* Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them. And good reason there is for it, in a musical instrument, the strings that be out of tune, are set up, or set down to the rest; but the strings that be in tune, are never stirred, nor meddled with: though indeed I might have stopped their mouths with this very question, whether is better to obey God, or humour sensual men? As our Saviour Christ stopt the high Priests mouths, when they asked him, by what authority he cursed the fruitless Fig-tree, cast the buyers and sellers out of the temple, &c. by demanding of them, whether John's Baptism was from heaven, or of men, *Mark 11.29.*

But in case they will not return unto us, we had rather offend each of them once, than our selves every day. It is pity that ever the water of baptism was spilt upon his face, that cares more to discontent the world, than to wrong God. They are unjust and over partial, that will go about to exact from us, that which we owe not, with more rigour then they will exact from themselves, that which they owe.

And so I have given you the reasons, why such as are, or desire to be conscientious and religious, break off company with them; and vindicated the most usual exceptions against it. I will now make some use of the point; and so leave it for them to chew upon.

§. 35.

1. **T**O sum up all in a word, or lay all these grounds & motives together. If we endanger our selves, our lives, our estates, lose our credit, our peace, our time, by frequent associating with ungodly men, and can no way expect their love and friendship, be sure you come not (or at least stay not) in their company. It is not safe venturing among them, in confidence of our own strength, no more then it is to comfort with cheaters, in hope that they will not cozen us. Dead fire, we know, being stird up, will burn afresh: and corruption, like a candle new put out, is soon kindled again; If Satan but blow upon it, thy own heat is enough to enflame it.

No venture nor thy self, though thou hast once or twice come off clear from them; Sampson could not withstand his wives temptation seven daies, but at length, by her importunity, she prevailed with him, *Judg. 14.* Over many in this case are like to sick men, who when they have had a good day, or two, think themselves presently well again; so they make bold to put off their Kerchiefs, to put on thinner garments, and to venture into the fresh air; whereupon follows unrecoverable relapses. Wherefore take heed, or if thou dost keep their company, it is an argument, that thou art sick of their disease, idleness. And of this Use so much.

2. If wicked company are so infectious, that they will work a consumption in any mans vertues, that is daily conversant with them, & wast them from an ounce, to a dram; from a dram, to a scruple, to a grain, to nothing, so that he may say with Christ in the crowd, Who hath touched me, for I feel vertue gone out of me? Let us be (as Seneca adviseth) more circumspect, with whom

We eat and drink, then what we eat and drink. He that hath money, will be ware of thieves: if you have any grace, venture it not among these rishers: art thou inclined to pray? they will tempt thee to play: wouldst thou go to Sermon? by their persuasion, the Tavern or Theater stands in the way. But alas! if others tempt thee not, thou wilt tempt others: temptation needs no stand, like a Tavern-bush, in thy way, for thou wilst invite thy self, hum after temptation.

3. Is every man basic in suspending that quality, which is predominant in him? And can we converse with none but will work upon us, and by the unperceived stealth of time, assimilate us to their own customs? Will two friends, like two brands set each other on fire with good, or ill, when one alone will go out? Will a straight twig, if it be tied to a crooked bough, become crooked; or crooked twigs become straight, if it be tied to a straight rule: as Peter denied his Master amongst the Jews, whom he confesses among the Apostles? Then keep company, but let it be with such as may make thee better: flee evil society, lest their kind words so work upon thy yielding nature, that thou knowest how to do: they are such as have taken the Devil's Oath of Allegiance, and thou hast small hope to prevail with them to good.

A certain King (as S. Augustin reports) being hard favoured, and fearing lest his Queen should bring forth Children like himself; got many fair and beautiful pictures, which he caused her sedately to behold every day: go thou and do likewise, be conversant with good men, and in good things, and thou shalt do that unbidden, which others can scarce do compelled by the Law, as Aristotle speaks of the study of Philosophy. O what an happy thing it is to converse with the virtuous: their gracious words, &c. holy examples will be sure to stir up the gifts of God in us; they will either add something to our zeal, or something to our knowledge: the society of Prophets is able to make even a Saul prophetic. The sight of others falling heartily to their meat, brings on our stomachs: yet, if we have no gifts to stir up, their company cannot but leave some taint upon us: if not of Piety, yet, at least of a good profession, and some inclinableness. If Saul had not had a good and discreet companion, when he went to seek his Fathers Asses, he had returned back as wise as he came: but now he is drawn into counsel with the Men of God, and bears more than he hoped for, 1 Sam. 9.6. The messengers of the same Saul, when they lived in the court, were (as is likely) carried away with the swing of the times, and did apply themselves to their Masters ungodly practises, as appeareth in their going to apprehend David, that Saul might kill him: yet were they no sooner in company with the Prophets, in Nyoth, but their minds were changed, and they likewise prophesied, 1 Sam. 19.20.

Ob. But say some of Bacchus his fools, I keep company with brave fellows, that are generous, free, bountiful, &c.

Ans. Alas! thou dost but slander him with these titles. He is a proud, ignorant, inconsiderate Ass, that fears he is not loved, unless he be loose and scattering; that strives so to be like a God in bounty, that he throws himself into the lowest estate of man. He that gives to, & spends upon all abundantly (which is for none to do, but him that hath all) he that had rather keep com-

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pany with the dregs of men, then not be the best man : he that ravel's out a spacious fortune upon flatterers, he that out of vain glory will be worship't & kneed, to the spending of a fair inheritance, and then ends his daies in lewdness & contempt (as what is it that ambition will not practise, rather then let her port decline) he is a foolish steward, that thus showers away in one year, what his ancestors have been gathering twenty : yea, he is a mad man, that makes his kindness to others, prove cruelty to himself, and all his posterity.

Ob. Again, others are all for mirth, they keep company at the Tavern, with none but curious and quaint wits, eloquent Poets and Orators; now ask them as *Manoah* did *Sampson*, Is there never a companion for thee among thy brethren, the people of God, that thou must associate thy self with these of uncircumcised hearts and tongues ? They will answer, Give me only these for my companions, for they please me.

Ans. Can none please thee, but such as displease God ? dost thou not know, that *whoever will be a friend to such, makes himself the enemy of God* ? Jam. 4.4. Or art thou ignorant, that pleasant wits, vitiated in accustomed lewdness, with sweet tunes entice men to destruction ; as is morall'd in that fiction of the *Syrens*, they delight the sense, but slay the soul: and will any man poison his body, to please his tast ? or go into an infected house, to fetch out a rich suit ? Or put his finger into a fiery Crucible, to take out gold ? It's true, like Juglers and such as play tricks of *Legerdemain*, they will deceive us with a kind of pleasure & delight: but is it any priviledge for a man to be tickled to death, that so he may die laughing ? their discourse may be resembled to the fruit that undid us all, which was fair in sight, smooth in handling, sweet in tast, but deadly in effect : or to the *Clarian water*, which made men eloquent, but withal short liv'd ; or the gifts, which those Elses called *Iamiae*, used to present unto children, which made so many as accepted of them, lose their comeliness for ever after. And he that much affects their company (being an honest man) is just like that *free Citizen*, that so doted on a female slave, that he would needs marry her; though by that match, he were sure, by the law, to become a slave with her. He overvalues the drunken and reeling love of these men, that buies it with the ruine of himself, his estate, & family. Wherefore, as in meats, we do not only stand upon pleasantness, but wholesomeness ; so let us regard wholesomeness as well as pleasantness, in our discourse and company. A good man can lend nothing to the increase of mirth in wicked company: and he that will not lend, let him take heed of borrowing.

§. 36.

Fourthly, If thou wouldst neither be enticed nor enforced to pledge them, in any of their wicked customs, divorce thy self from all acquaintance & society with the vicious, yea, entertain no parley with them.

There are some vices of that nature, that they cannot be vanquished but by avoiding; such is fornication, flee fornication, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 6. 18. that is, flee the company of fornicators; for to be in a lewd womans company, saith *Solomon*, and depart innocent, and to take fire in a mans bosom, and not singe his cloaths, or go upon live coals, and his feet not be burnt, are equally possible, Prov. 6.27. 28. Such is the frailty of mans nature, that if the

eye but see, or the ear hear, or the hand but touch a whorish woman, the heart will go nigh to catch, and take fire, ver. 29. And thus it fares with this sin, bid a man consort a while with drunkards, and depart from them innocent, you may as well put a match to dry powder, and forbid it to take fire, except he be very well staied, and of better govern'd affections then ordinary. It is not safe to comitt a little Wherry to the Seas violence. A stick that hath once been in the fire, much more a torch newly extinguished, being forthwith put to the flame, will soon be kindled again. Wherefore keep out of the reach of thy vicious acquaintance, and if they beckon thee one way, ~~be~~ sure thou take the contrary, at least entertain no parley with them. When *Castles* once come to a parley, there is great fear they will yield: and gates that are alwaies open, will sometime admit an enemy. No disputing with Satan, or his deputies: when our first parents fell to arguing the case with that old *Serpent*, though in the state of innocence, when they had wit at will, and their reason at command, they found him too hard for them: how much more too weak shall we find our selves, that now are as we are? surely, we are like to lose all, if once we enter into disputation with that old Sophister, and crafty fox, after the experience of six thousand years almost, and when our own flesh (which is the greatest both deceiver and dissembler in the world) is become his cunning *Solicitor*.

Alas! he desires no more then to be heard speak; for grant him but this, and he will perswade thee to believe, even contrary to thine own knowledge: as how easily did he perswade *Eve*, by himself; & *Adam*, by her (when they gave but ear to him) to believe what he spake, though they had heard God himself say the contrary, but a little before, Gen. 2. 17. & if innocence found no means of resistance, what hope have we so extreamly degenerated? And indeed, why do we pray not to be led into temptation, if we lead our selves into temptation? If we will not keep our selves from the occasion, God will not keep us from the sin: & if God do not keep us, we cannot be kept, we cannot, we will not shuse but fall. Wherefore shun the society of evil persons, as *Joseph* shunned the society of his *Mistress*, and leave them that leave God, as *Noah* did the old world, and that by Gods commandment, Gen. 7. 1, 7. & *Abraham* the Canaanites, Gen. 12. 1. & *Lot* the Sodomites, Gen. 19. 17. & *Israel* the Egyptians, Exod. 12. 37, 41. & *Moab* and *Ammon*, Numb. 27. 1, 2, 3, 16, 17.

§. 37.

But is it warrantable, may some say, to separate from our old acquaintance (being vicious) and other the like company?

Not totally: for then we must go o't of the world, 1 Cor. 5. 10. Nor from any in all cases; for then we must separate from the publick assemblies: nor in regard of civil society, and necessary commerce; for this were to unglue the whole worlds frame, which is contexted only by commerce and contrats: there be certain wise uses to be made of them, for our convenience or necessity, which need not, yea, must not be forborn: as wherefore serves discretion but that (as a glafs window) it may let in the light, and keep out the wind?

Neither can wicked men, in this case, be avoided: but so long as we are in this world, we must converse with men of the world: & we know it is lawful enough, in terms of civility, to deal with infidels, yea, even the savages,

against evil Society.

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Cannibals may receive an answer of outward courtesy. If a very dog sware upon us, we stroke him on the head, and clap him on the back, much less is the common bond of humanity untied by grace; disparity in spiritual profession, is no warrant for ingratitude: yet a little friendship with such, is enough; the less communion with any of Gods enemies, the more safety: and sure I am, that those who affect a familiar entireness with such, bewray either too much boldness, or too little conscience.

Yea, we may not only converse with evil men, but communicate with them also without harm, so it be not in evil things: as in the Sacrament the unworthy receiver eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, *sibi, non tibi*, to himself, not to thee.

But as touching a familiar entireness, and leagues of amity, that they are unfit, unwarriable, dangerous, is easie to prove. As what saith the Holy Ghost by S. Paul? *We command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every brother, that walketh disorderly, and not after the instruction which ye received of us,* 2 Thes. 3. 6: And again, speaking unto the converted Ephesians, touching others among them, *who were whoremongers, unclean persons, covetous men, and idolaters*, he saith, *be not companions with them, Eph. 5. 5, 7.* And lastly, in that case of the incestuous Corinthian, he doth not only excommunicate him, but makes a rule upon it, that if any one, which professeth himself a Christian, shall live in any scandalous course, *that they shall not afford him so much as civil and familiar converse, 1 Cor. 5. 11.* If any man that is called a brother, saith he, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an Idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extorter, *with such an one eat not.* Mark this all ye swinish drunkards, and beastly livers, that God dischargeth us your society.

But to proceed; Why was that Law enacted, for the strict avoiding of Lewd persons? It was not the body only that was herein respected by the God of spirits; those that are spiritually contagious, must be still and ever avoided, they must be separated from us, we from them, they from us, by just tenures, or if not, we from them, by a voluntary declination of their familiar conversation: or if they can joyn our heart to theirs, they will disjoyn it from God; to let pass S. Pauls charge, 2 Cor. 6. 17. *Come out from among them, and separate your selves:* And that of the Angel, Rev. 18. 4. *Come out of her people, which especially have relation to Idolaters:* see what hath been the practice of Gods people since Noah, Lot, Abraham, and Israel, which have been alledged already. Doth not David say, *I have not sate with ungodly persons, neither kept company with the dissenniblers. I have hated the assembly of evil doers, and will not company with the wicked,* Psal. 26. 4, 5. And was not Joseph, whom the Holy Ghost stileth a just man, fully minded (before the Angel forbade him) to put away Mary, after he was betrothed unto her, when he but supposed her to be dishonest? Mat. 1. 19. And was not all this to shew what we should do in the like cases?

Wherefore let us tread in their steps, and say with a worthy Divine, though may have many bad acquaintance, yet I will have no bad companions: For in the tame beasts will not keep with the wild; nor the clean dwell with the

the leprous. But above all, let us keep no drunkards, nor swearers in houses, Psal. 101. 4. & 6, 7, 8. no, nor scoffers, Ishmael must be turned out doors, when he once fals a jeering of Isaac : and indeed if we do, it is a shrewd *Injunction* we are not sincere our selves : for grace, as it is resembled to heat, like heat, it gathereth together things of one kind, separateth things of a contrary nature, as dross from Gold.

In fine, if they have forsaken all honesty, and good conscience, it is time to forsake them: if they depart from us, in the foundation of faith and godly works, let us (as justly we may) depart from them, in the building of brotherly fellowship : they build on the sand, let us build on the rock ; yea, if they forsake the right way, we must forsake them, or Christ will forsake us.

But lest all that hath been said, should not be sufficient to persuade the beholder here the drunkard declinated, & that will certainly affright thee from parting with a fiend so foul and filthy, so ugly and loathsome : which if it be I hope some good man or other, will stick it upon every post; that all may be less enamoured with this worse then beastly abomination.

The Drunkard is a strange Chimæra, more prodigious then any Monster living, In Visage a man, but a Brotheus. In heart, a Swine, in Head, a Cephalus, in Tongue, an Asp, in Belly, a Lump, in Appetite, a Leech, in Sloath, an Ignoramus. A Jerrie for excessive devouring, a Goat for lust, a Syren for flattery, Hypena for subtlety, a Panther for cruelty, in envying, a Basilisk, in antipathy to good, a Lekus, in binding others from good, a Remoratus, in life, a Salamander in conscience, an Ostrich, in spirit, a Devil. 1. In surpassing others in sin. 2. in tempting others to sin. 3. in drawing others to perdition. Even the most despicable piece of all humanity, and not worthy to be reckoned among the Crews which God made.

• And so much for defence against what they do, which may be avoided. You would have as much against what they say, which must be endured, to the Victory of Patience.

Or if any would have the foregoing part of this *Armour of Proof* against their Society, let them enquire for *Sin Stigmatized*, or *The Drunkards Charter*, with which it is bound, and in a larger Letter.

FINIS.